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What Is to Be Done With the Foreign Missions Deficit?

The whole Church knows that the Board of Foreign Missions ended the last fiscal year on March 31st with a deficit of $292,150.16. A good part of the Church knows also how the deficit arose. It did not arise from any unwarranted or injudicious expansion of the work. The work was enlarged during the year with the full approval of the Executive Commission and the General Assembly. But it was not unduly enlarged. The increase was only the normal increase which had been made year after year. It presumed no greater rate of increase of gifts than had been made in preceding years. It fell far short of what the work demanded. But the contributions of the year did not equal the necessities and the new year has begun, accordingly, with the largest deficit which the Board has ever known.

What is to be done with it? The General Assembly considered this question and appointed a representative committee with the Moderator as Chairman to raise this deficit and, at the suggestion of the Foreign Board, to include

also the deficit of the Board of Home Missions, which was $137,895.79.

These deficits must be raised. The work at home is just entering on a new epoch. It should enter it not only without encumbrance but with greatly enlarged resources. And the reasons why the deficit on Foreign Missions must be provided are clear and urgent.

In the first place, there can be NO RETREAT. If the deficit is not specially provided it will have to be met by contracting the work or by halting the advance for several years, which will mean retreat, as the whole world is under movement to-day, and to stand still is to fall back. We cannot do this.

In the second place, the work represented by the deficit has been done and *is still going on.* Not only is there need of the $292,000, but in the current fiscal year there must be contributions to prevent the recurrence of the same deficit this year with an increase, for the work for 1914-1915 is a larger work than ever before. Quite apart from the deficit of last year there will have to be an increase in the gifts of the churches and Sunday Schools and Women's Boards of 60 per cent. over the gifts of last year in order to meet the full needs of the current year. To ensure the provision of this increased amount, the deficit should be raised as an extra effort.

In the third place, the deficit impends most discouragingly not over the Board but upon the missionaries. There are now 1,226 missionaries from our Church in the Missions abroad. To furnish personal support and living accommodations and the actual necessities of the work for these missionaries requires an average appropriation of $1,012.50 per missionary. To cut this down or to threaten to cut it down is a shadow upon each missionary's spirit. Let it be remembered that upon this amount the missionaries themselves are maintained, and that in addition they employed 5,766 native workers, and conducted 1,781 colleges, training schools, medical schools, theological seminaries, high schools, and elementary schools with 64,687 pupils, 3,104 Sunday Schools with 154,139 pupils, 173 hospitals and dispensaries with 305,035 patients, and ten presses issuing 95,105,452 pages last year. All this costs less than one-half the annual budget of Columbia University alone. Is it conceivable that this small amount should be reduced by throwing the deficit back upon the missionaries? Surely not by Christians.

In the fourth place, all the world conditions which we face to-day demand that there should be no withdrawal or retrenchment. In Japan the present-day opportunity exceeds any known in past years. The great village population,

embracing 85 per cent. of the Japanese people, is accessible now. The students are more open than ever before. The leaders of the nation have recognized and declared the nation's need of religion and have called on Christianity to do its utmost to meet this need. In China the temporary readjustment of the republic to benevolently despotic rule, so far from shutting the door of opportunity, has opened it yet wider. Missions have an absolutely free and unabridged field and the crowds who listen in the country are greater and more interested than ever. The Rev. Du Bois S. Morris writes in a recent letter from Hwai Yuen of his last country trip:

"As I look back over the trip, the one thing which remains most clearly in my mind is the new eagerness on the part of these many people to listen. I have often been in crowds during my life in China, but never before in such listening crowds, never when there were so many who seemed to come, not because of curiosity, but because they wanted to hear about God. It is a very inspiring memory, and a very sobering one, too, for how are we meeting this opportunity? How are we entering into these new doors which God has so wonderfully opened for us? Perhaps we should meet it with the same prayer that was overheard among the women

in Meng Chen. A room full were trying to memorize the Lord's Prayer. There was much noise and confusion, and one faithful old soul trying in vain to keep up, finally went off to a corner, and she was heard there repeating a little prayer of her own. It was short, and she said it softly, again and again —'O Lord, thankful and unworthy.'"

In India the census results just published have astonished the British Government with their evidence of the spread of Christianity, especially among the village people.

The total number of Christians in India at the time of the census was 3,876,203, or twelve per mile of the population. During the decade since the previous census, the increase was 32.6 per cent., and the number of Christains has more than doubled since 1881. The proportional increase is by far the greatest in the Panjab, where there are now three times as many Christians as in 1901; in the Central Provinces and Berar the increase is 169 per cent., and in Hyderabad, Assam and the United Provinces the increases are 136, 89, and 75 per cent., respectively. Lutherans, chiefly found in Madras and in Behar and Orissa, have increased by 41 per cent., and Methodist adherents are two and a half times as numerous as a decade ago. Presbyterians have achieved even more remarkable results.

With 181,000 adherents they are more than three times as numerous as in 1901. The Panjab has shown a phenomenal increase among Presbyterians, whose numbers have grown from 5,000 to 95,000 in the ten years.

As to the effect of Christianity on the converts, Mr. Blunt, one of the Census Superintendents, draws attention to the greater cleanliness of dress and habits among converts as compared with the classes from whom they are drawn. "The new convert, maybe, is no better than his predecessors; but a new generation, the children of the first generation of converts, is now growing up. . . . The children of the converts, born in Christianity, are very different from their parents; their grandchildren will be better still. It is this which provides the other side to the black picture so often drawn of the inefficiency of Christian conversion. . . . The Hindu fellows of these converts have now to acknowledge, not only that they are in many material ways better off than themselves, but that they are also better men." The Mysore Superintendent, himself a Hindu, says that missionaries work mainly among the backward classes, and "that the enlightening influence of Christianity is patent in the higher standard of comfort of the converts, and their sober, disciplined, and busy lives."

In every mission field conditions like these can be discerned. There are difficulties enough and the true fruitage is gathered slowly, but the opportunities are simply boundless. The Church never had anything like them in other days. Dare we neglect or reject them now?

All these conditions call "No Retreat." "Clear away the deficit," they say, "and go forward."

A special fund for this purpose was opened before the General Assembly by Mr. Dwight H. Day, Treasurer of the Board of Foreign Missions, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City, and special gifts are asked for this fund, apart from and in addition to the contributions of churches or individuals to the regular work of all the Boards this year, which must be not only maintained but increased. Contributions large and small will be specially acknowledged for the "No Retreat Fund." This fund is in association with the joint deficit fund of the Home and Foreign Boards handled by Mr. Olin.

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